



City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training
Employees About:

Cleanup Hazards

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Cleanup Hazards

Cleanup work of any kind is hazardous, after a severe weather event, it is even more of a challenge. With severe weather season fast approaching, that means severe weather cleanup is soon to follow bringing unusual or daunting tasks that may not be a part of every day life for the average city worker.

Health Tips

Take frequent rest breaks when lifting heavy, water-laden objects and avoid overexertion and practice good lifting techniques. To help prevent injury, use teams of two or more to move bulky objects, avoid lifting any materials that weigh more than 50 pounds per person, and use proper automated lifting assistance devices if practical. When working in hot environments, have plenty of drinking water available, use sunscreen, and take frequent rest breaks and wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Be sure that a first aid kit is available to disinfect any cuts or abrasions. Protect open cuts and abrasions with waterproof gloves or dressings. Wash your hands often during the day, especially before eating, or drinking.

General Precautions

Use a wooden stick or pole to check flooded areas for pits, holes, and protruding objects before entering. Ensure that all ladders and scaffolds are properly secured prior to use. Conduct a preliminary worksite inspection to verify stability before entering a flooded or formerly flooded building or before operating vehicles over roadways or surfaces. Don't work in or around any flood damaged building until it has been examined and certified as safe for work by a registered professional engineer or architect. Washouts, trenches, excavations, and gullies must be supported or their stability verified prior to worker entry. All trenches should be supported (e.g., with a trench box); if no support is available, the trench must be sloped at no less than a 45" angle for cohesive soil and angular gravel and a 34" angle for granular soils including gravel, sand, and loamy sand or submerged soil. Establish a plan for contacting medical personnel in the event of an emergency. Report any obvious hazards (downed power lines, frayed electric wires, or gas leaks) to appropriate authorities.

Use fuel-powered generators outdoors. Do not bring them indoors, as they may pose a carbon monoxide (CO) hazard. Use life-vests when engaged in activities that could result in deep water exposure. Use extreme caution when handling containers

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holding unknown substances or known toxic substances (for example, floating containers of household or industrial chemicals). Contact the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) for information on disposal at the National Response Center (800) 424-8802. Do NOT use improvised surfaces (e.g., refrigerator racks) for cooking food or for boiling water to avoid exposure to heavy metals.

Clothing and Personal Protective

Always wear watertight boots with a steel toe and insole, gloves, long pants, and safety glasses during cleanup operations; sneakers should NOT be worn because they will not prevent punctures, bites, or crush injuries. Wear a hardhat if there is any danger of falling debris. Wear a NIOSH-approved dust respirator if working with moldy building materials. When handling bleach or other chemicals, follow the directions on the package; wear eye, hand, and face protection as appropriate, and have plenty of clean water available for eyewash and other first aid treatments.

Electrical Hazards

Do not touch downed power lines or any object or water that is in contact with such lines. Treat all power lines as energized until you are certain that the lines have been de-energized. Beware of overhead and underground power lines when clearing debris. Extreme caution is necessary when moving ladders and other equipment near overhead power lines to avoid inadvertent contact. If damage to an electrical system is suspected (for example, if the wiring has been under water, you can smell burning insulations, wires are visibly frayed, or you see sparks), turn off the electrical system in the building and follow lockout/tag out procedures before beginning work. Do not turn the power back on until electrical equipment has been inspected by a qualified electrician. When using a generator, be sure that the main circuit breaker is off and locked out prior to starting the generator. This will prevent inadvertent energizing of power lines from back feeding electrical energy from generators and help protect utility line workers from possible electrocution. Be aware that de-energized power lines may become energized by a secondary power source such as a portable backup generator. Any electrical equipment, including extension cords, used in wet environments must be marked, as appropriate, for use in wet locations and must be undamaged. Be sure that all connections are out of water. All cord-connected, electrically operated tools and equipment must be grounded or be double insulated. Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) must be used in all wet locations. Portable GFCIs can be purchased at your local hardware store.



Driving Safety

Between 1992 and 2001, 13,337 civilian workers died in roadway crashes, an average of four deaths each day. Roadway crashes led all other causes, making up 22% of workplace deaths, compared with 13% from homicide and 10% from falls (*Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries*).

In 2000, lost wages and benefits for crash victims (occupational and nonoccupational) were \$61 billion. Costs to employers due to the loss or absence of an employee from work accounted for \$4.6 billion more (*National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*). For employers and victims, a workplace crash can have far-reaching financial, medical, and legal consequences.

Who is at risk? – Anyone who operates a motor vehicle as part of his or her job is at risk of being involved in a roadway crash.

In 2001, nearly 4.2 million U.S. workers were motor vehicle operators and 73% were truck drivers. Roadway crashes are by far the leading cause of death for transport workers. Millions of other workers who are not full-time professional drivers operate company or personal vehicles for deliveries, sales and repair calls, client visits, and many other tasks. Roadway crashes are also the leading cause of death for workers in clerical and professional specialty jobs, and the second leading cause for executives, sales workers, and technicians, (*Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey and Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries*).

Unlike other workplaces, the roadway is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related roadway crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behavior by providing safety information to workers and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies. Crashes are not an unavoidable part of doing business. Employers can take steps to protect their employees and their companies:

Policies

- Assign a key member of the management team the responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policies.
- Enforce mandatory seat belt use.
- Do not require workers to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours.
- Do not require workers to conduct business on a cell phone while driving.
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours-of-service regulations.

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Fleet Management

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program.
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection.

Safety Programs

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions.
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job.

Driver Performance

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license and one that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven.
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring.
- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance.

Work Related Road Way Crashes

Types of vehicles occupied by victims:

- Semi-trucks (28%).
- Automobiles (24%).
- Pickup trucks (12%).

Event and worker characteristics:

- 49% were collisions between vehicles.
- 53% occurred between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- 38% occurred on U.S. or State-designated highways.
- 89% of fatally injured workers were male.
- Risk of fatality increased at age 55 and older.

Industries in which victims were employed:

- Transportation (33%).
- Services (14%).
- Construction (11%).

Employers, employees, and others can take practical measures to prevent work-related roadway deaths while research continues in areas that are critical for further progress, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends in a new report.

NIOSH Hazard Review: Work-Related Roadway Crashes—Challenges and Opportunities for Prevention provides in-depth data, analysis, and recommendations for preventing the leading cause of job-related fatalities. Employee deaths in roadway crashes increased by 18.7% from 1992 to 2000, totaling 11,952 over the nine-year period.

The burden of fatalities and injuries is not limited to full-time professional drivers such as long-haul truckers. Other employees who operate company-owned vehicles over shorter trips and employees who drive personal vehicles on the job are also at risk. Preventive measures that can save lives include these, NIOSH recommends:

Employers should:

- Enforce mandatory on-the-job use of seat belts;
- Ensure that employees who drive on the job have valid licenses;
- Incorporate fatigue management into safety programs;
- Provide fleet vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection in the event of a crash;
- Ensure that employees receive necessary training to operate specialized vehicles;
- Offer periodic vision screening and general physicals for employees whose primary job duty is driving;
- Avoid requiring workers to drive irregular hours or significantly extended hours;
- Establish schedules that allow drivers to obey speed limits;
- Set policies in accordance with states' graduated driver's licensing laws and child labor laws; and
- Assign driving-related tasks to younger employees incrementally.

Employees should:

- Use safety belts;
- Avoid using cell phones while driving; and
- Avoid other potentially distracting activities such as eating, drinking, or adjusting noncritical vehicle controls while driving.



Transportation planners and traffic engineers should:

- Consider reducing the number of places where vehicles can enter onto or exit from state highways and U.S. highways, thus minimizing the number of situations in which large trucks and local passenger vehicles entering the stream of traffic may collide;
- Recommend wider use of shoulder rumble strips to alert drivers that they are leaving the roadway; and
- Plan road construction projects so that traffic is isolated from construction activity whenever possible.

The new Hazard Review, *DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2003-119*, is the latest of several NIOSH reports to advance the prevention of work-related motor vehicle deaths and injuries. The Hazard Review is available by calling toll-free 1-800-35-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674) or from the web at www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-119/. Additional information on preventing work-related motor vehicle deaths and injuries is available on the web at www.cdc.gov/niosh/injury/traumamv.html.

Actions of other motorists may cause work-related crashes

During a non-emergency medical transport, a 26 year-old emergency medical technician (EMT) died when the ambulance she was in was struck head-on by a pickup truck traveling in excess of 70 miles per hour in the wrong lane of a two-lane roadway. Attending a patient, the EMT was unrestrained when the incident occurred. The EMT struck the front bulkhead and died of head and chest injuries enroute to the hospital.



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or other employees like to receive
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If so, send your request or changes
along with your e-mail address to
Wendy Flowers at wflowers@lkm.org



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